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BACK TO SCHOOL WITH BREATHE EASY

Breathe easy
at home program

Flu Season

Flu Season (typically October-March) is here! Children, with their still developing immune systems, are at higher risk for the flu, especially those with chronic health conditions such as Asthma.

Each year, 20,000 children 5 and under are hospitalized due to flu-related complications, with severe complications occurring most often in children under 2 (CDC). A previous study conducted by the CDC found that parental medical expenses due to a flu-stricken child under the age of 5 ranged from \$300-\$4,000 with 11-73 hours of missed work time to care for the sick child.

To prevent the flu, children 6+ months should be vaccinated.

Healthcare providers, [pharmacies](#) (18+) and flu clinics carry the vaccines which are available now!



Click the link below to view BPHC's [Flu Prevention PSA](#)

The Infectious Disease Bureau of BPHC can answer anything flu or flu vaccine related, amongst other things. Give them a call at [617-534-5611](#). All calls are **confidential**.

Clinicians, do your patients need assistance with insurance or health care resources? Do they

have questions about the flu and/or flu clinics? Call or visit the [Mayor's Health Line](#) (MHL). MHL is a **free, confidential and multi-lingual** information and referral service. They are open during normal business hours and can assist with health insurance enrollment. MHL is here to ensure Boston resident's have access to services and programs that promote health and wellness. They are located at 1010 Mass Ave, 2nd Floor and they can be reached at [617-534-5050](#) or toll-free at [1-800-847-0710](#).



Heating Season

Massachusetts heating season, Sept. 15-June 15th, is upon us and everyone should be in an adequately heated home and the City of Boston has resources to ensure that you are.

[Here](#) you can find fuel assistance information for your patients on local and state programs, discounted rates and other resources, such as Environment and Energy saving tips and General Q&A regarding heat

assistance, utility discounts and how to improve your home's energy performance.

For low income residents of Massachusetts contact the *Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)* heat line at [1-800-632-8175](#). Assistance is provided for oil, electricity, natural gas, propane, kerosene, wood and coal costs. Visit the [LIHEAP](#) website for more information on how to apply.

The Salvation Army's *Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund* provides temporary financial assistance to state residents who do not qualify for state and/or federal energy assistance but are financially strained in meeting the monthly energy expense. Income guidelines, eligibility requirements contact information and more can be found on their website.

Facing utility shut off? The Attorney General's consumer hotline

can assist with utility rights and protection. Call [617-727-8400](#) with questions or to report unfair practices.

The MA State Sanitary Code requires that landlords provide working heating systems that are capable of heating spaces to a minimum temperature of 68 degrees between the hours of 7AM and 11PM and 64 degrees from 11PM to 7AM.

The tenant's landlord should be notified of heating issues immediately. If they fail to respond, please call ISD at [617-635-5300](#) during normal business hours (8AM-4PM) Monday-Friday. After hours, contact the 24 hour "No Heat" response team via the Mayor's 24 hour Hotline at [617-635-4500](#).

"In every part of the world, the peak of asthma in children corresponds to the one to two weeks after they go back to school"

([worldasthmafoundation.org](#))

Mold Prevention

Mold can be a serious trigger for those living with asthma. Weather changes from warm summer months to wet and winter months may increase chances of mold within the home.

Mold may be found indoors as well as outdoors and can thrive in warm, damp and humid environments. Typically, mold can be found within shower/baths and basements due to their propensity for being damp or moist but any environment in the home that may be moist can house mold.

Controlling moisture is the best way to pre-

vent mold.

- Repair structural and/or plumbing leaks
- If a leak or water damage does occur, the area must be cleaned and dried within 24-48hrs
- Keeping indoor humidity low is ideal, between 30-50%
- Utilize bathroom fans while showering
- Wipe shower walls afterwards and leave the door open
- Ensure bathroom fans and ventilation systems are clean for best use

- Avoid using humidifiers and vent appliances to the outdoors
- Avoid living in basement apartments or rooms without adequate ventilation

Small areas where mold/mildew is present can be cleaned with a vinegar and water mixture. Click [here](#) for some other safe cleaning tips.

Mold problems should be immediately. A landlord should be notified if there is visible mold growth; under the Massachusetts State Sanitary Code it is their responsibility to maintain structural elements. If the landlord does not resolve the issue, contact Boston's ISD at [617-635-5300](tel:617-635-5300).

Breathe Easy at Home Updates

Interested in **FREE** swimming lessons for your patients?

Mildred Avenue Community Center is holding their swim program for asthmatic kids 8-12.

WHO: All levels of swimmers

WHEN: October 31st 1-5pm (Program runs for 10 weeks)

WHERE: 5 Mildred Ave. Mattapan, Ma 02126

Call Valerie at [617-635-1328](tel:617-635-1328) or email Dirk at asthmaswimprogram@gmail.com for more information.

Breathe Easy is currently filling up our calendar for BEAH presentations to local Health Centers. To ensure all of our registered sites are actively using the online web portal to make home inspection referrals, we will be hitting the road presenting the program, demonstrating how to correctly make a referral, answering questions, and providing print material. If we haven't set a date yet to visit your health center, call us at [617-534-2485](tel:617-534-2485) and we will be happy to do so.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grant

This September the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation two year grant came to an end. The grant, awarded to the Boston Public Health Commission, provided the opportunity to evaluate BEAH and identify strategies for more effective collaborations between agencies serving Boston residents. Margaret Reid (BPHC), Megan Sandel (BMC), and Madeleine Scammell (BUSoPH) were the research leads for the grant.

The overall goal of the study was to look at how effective the program is,

the impact BEAH has, and how the information gathered from the study can be used to improve the program. One evaluation method used was Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA). FMEA is a process used to help identify risks and ranks each based on multiple factors: severity, occurrence and detectability. The FMEA group was made up of key partners: a parent representative, a community health worker, ISD administrator, ISD inspector, health care provider and BEAH coordinator.

20 failures were identified and system improvements were put in place to improve the program. To improve the failure with the highest rating, (poorly informed patients and health care education) outreach materials have been updated and YouTube videos have been created for health-care providers, landlords, and tenants.

Client participation, the second highest failure, has resulted in new contact protocols which use a text/call/email notification system which

reminds patients of their scheduled inspection. This system is currently in the pilot stage.

Here's the [YouTube video](#), directed to patients, in which a mother of asthmatic children who had a BEAH inspection explains her positive experience with the program. The BEAH website will also be getting a facelift reducing the possibility of healthcare providers entering incorrect information into the online web-portal.

A peer reviewed journal article was published in *Frontiers in Public Health Services and Systems Research*. Read it [here](#).